

Our History: Where did we come from?

In 1904 the legislature enabled the establishment of the precursor to the present Bureau of Laboratories. The State Dairy and Pure Food Commission suggested that "A State Chemist be employed and a laboratory established". Since the Board of Health was not established until 1919, the Bureau of Labs is probably one of the older sections in the Department of Health and Welfare. It is also, with the possible exception of early mining assay laboratories, one of the older laboratory entities in the state.

Other state laboratories have "spun off" from the Bureau. The milk testing, which was one of our original functions, has been moved to the Department of Agriculture. In the early 1960s, we began doing limited forensic testing for the law enforcement agencies in Idaho. From then into the 1980s, this effort became a full-fledged forensic laboratory. That laboratory was moved to Department of Law Enforcement (DLE). It is now in Meridian, at DLE's central facility there.